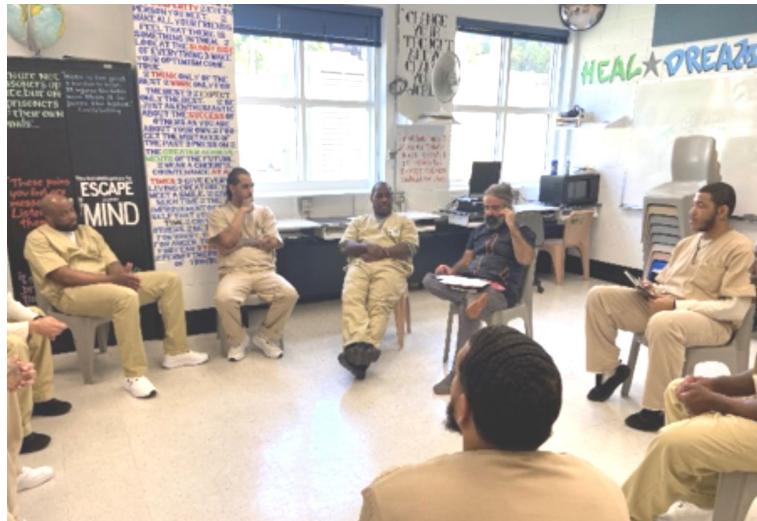


BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 11, Fall/Winter 2025



teach • love • inspire
CONNECTICUT
FATHERHOOD
INITIATIVE



Connecting through Literacy Incarcerated Parents,
their Children and Caregivers

Fall/Winter Edition

This Issue's focus:

Fathering From a Distance
Growth, Strength, Dignity
and Progression...

Welcome to the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative Biannual Newsletter!

Message from Our Network Commissioner Angel Quiros

Connecticut Department of Correction

"The Department of Correction is committed to the further development and continued implementation of effective programs that help incarcerated fathers embrace their roles as fathers - to build healthy lifestyles that will benefit both their children and themselves.

Fathers who are involved and connected with their children and families prior to release are less likely to return to prison.

Working collaboratively with organizations like the CT Fatherhood Initiative, I am confident that we can help strengthen family bonds and encourage brighter futures for justice-involved fathers and their children."



CT Fatherhood Initiative: Who Are We?

If you are a part of a system serving fathers and families in Connecticut, *we are you!* The CT Fatherhood Initiative (CFI), is a statewide multi-agency collaboration, led by the Department of Social Services, working toward a common goal: *to support children, mothers and fathers by focusing on the important influence of men who are or will be in fathering roles.*

CFI partners do this through systems change efforts as well as supporting direct services and programming for fathers, with a commitment to racial equity, gender equity and safe engagement of fathers with their children.

CTDOC's Wellness Committee



Over the past five years, CTDOC's Wellness Committee has worked with Waterbury Youth Services to help students in need succeed by providing school supplies like backpacks, folders, rulers, calculators, pencils, and more.

The Department of Correction is honored to be featured in this edition of the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative Newsletter for 2025. National studies have shown that children with incarcerated parents are at a higher risk of developing emotional, behavioral, and social difficulties that can impact development and follow them throughout their lives. CTDOC also recognizes that fathers who are involved and connected with their children and families prior to release are less likely to return to prison. As an agency, we are committed to developing and implementing effective programs that help incarcerated fathers embrace their roles as fathers - to build healthy lifestyles that benefit both their children and themselves.

The Department wants to acknowledge not only our internal staff but also our community partners for dedicating their time and creativity to delivering effective and lasting programs. Without our Volunteers, Interns, and Professional Partners (VIPs), DOC would not be able to achieve our Agency's mission alone.

In this issue, we will highlight a few programs that have made a significant impact on our residents. Additionally, we will showcase some of the remarkable work our staff does annually to give back to the children of Connecticut.

Virtual Visits

CT DOC facilities collaborate to facilitate virtual visits between incarcerated parents and their children or siblings.



"Any man can be a father, but it takes someone special to be a dad."

Anne Geddes

Bryan Geyer, Group Facilitator and Michael Wanico of Inside-Out Dad

“Thanks to the interpersonal communication skills I have learned through Inside-Out Dad, I have been able to feel so much closer to my two sons. I just feel more capable of being genuinely open with them and unafraid to let them know how I am feeling and what I am going through as well.



Michael, who is currently incarcerated, is making the most of his time by enrolling in programs that will benefit him and his family upon release. According to Correctional Counselor Collins, “Mr. Wanico, in particular, stands out as a true testament to how purposeful the Inside-Out Dad program is. Not only did Mr. Wanico graduate from the Inside-Out Dad program, but he’s also a participant in our agency’s work-furlough program and one test away from earning his GED.”

Inside-Out Dad

CTDOC and Madonna Place collaborate to provide Inside-Out Dad. This program stands as the nation’s most widely used, evidence-based curriculum designed specifically for incarcerated fathers. It is available at two of our correctional facilities to all returning citizens who are parents or in a parenting role. It has been proven to foster positive attitudes, skills, and knowledge related to fatherhood, helping fathers successfully reenter the lives of their families and communities.

Inside-Out Dad is a contracted program offering family support at two of CTDOC’s correctional facilities. Over twelve weeks, fathers will participate in a class engaging with other fathers in a supportive, small-group setting. Additional topics include parenting and relationships from a father’s perspective. It shows incarcerated fathers that they play a unique and irreplaceable role in their children’s lives.

York CI for Women

York CI has a housing unit for pregnant, postpartum, and breastmilk pumping mothers. Residents in this unit live together, support each other, and experience a less disruptive environment. Weekly educational groups on prenatal care, postpartum recovery, and pumping are led by Doulas contracted through the Office of Early Childhood. This treatment and education benefit the child of an incarcerated mother, helping ensure the baby receives the best nutrition during the first months of life. Milk is safely stored in freezers until it is transported to the baby. Supplies are readily available for this purpose. Currently, three incarcerated individuals at DOC are pumping to support their babies and families.

Manson Youth Institution

Manson Youth Institution offers a program called **“Playdates with Dad,”** where visits are arranged for MYI dads who are currently enrolled or have completed a fatherhood engagement program. Skills such as reading, sensory play, and floor engagement are identified and encouraged during these visits. This program promotes interactive play and helps strengthen co-parenting relationships.

CFI Partners

CT Departments of:

- Social Services
- Children and Families
- Correction
- Developmental Services
- Education
- Housing
- Labor
- Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Public Health
- Veterans Affairs

also

- Office of Early Childhood
- Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division, Support Enforcement Services, and Family Support Magistrate Division
- Board of Pardons and Parole
- Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity
- CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- CT State Colleges and Universities
- United Way of CT
- Legal services, researchers, and numerous community-based, family, and youth-serving providers

Embracing Fatherhood

The Connecticut Department of Correction offers a program called Embracing Fatherhood. This program aims to help incarcerated fathers understand the important role they play in their children's lives. This understanding will enable participants to embrace their roles as fathers and start building healthy lifestyles that benefit both their children and themselves. Throughout this year, the Programs & Treatment Unit focused on training staff to facilitate the Embracing Fatherhood curriculum. By October 2025, we had trained 93 staff members as facilitators. Our goal for 2026 is to expand the program's reach across the state.

Annual Tradition



In what has become an annual tradition, various facilities and units throughout the Department of Correction demonstrate their generosity by collecting gifts for those who might otherwise go without during the holiday season. For approximately twenty years, DOC has partnered with the Department of Children and Families to fulfill the wishes of "our" children.

Interested in learning more about DOC's current initiatives and programs?

Interested in offering programming to DOC's residents?

Visit <https://portal.ct.gov/doc/org/volunteer-and-recreation-services>

The Department of Social Services (DSS) programs are available to all applicants and recipients without regard to race, color, religious creed, age, sex (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), marital status, national origin, ancestry, intellectual disability, physical disability, (including blindness), past or present history of mental disability, learning disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, workplace hazards to reproductive systems, veteran status, prior conviction of a crime or other factors which cannot lawfully be the basis for employment actions or licensing, retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion or unless the provisions of sec. 46a-80(b) or 46a-81 (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes are controlling or there are bona fide occupational qualifications excluding persons in one of the above protected groups and status as a victim of domestic violence, status as a victim of human trafficking and status as a victim of sexual assault. DSS has a TDD/TTY line for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired and have a TDD/TTY: 1-800-842-4524, or dial 7-1-1.

Auxiliary aids are also available for blind or visually impaired persons.

The DSS is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer.